

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. QA-422

Magi No. 150 5833

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

CHESAPEAKE BAY SAILING LOG CANOE FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic MYSTERY

and/or common log canoe

2. Location

street & number Round Top Road, RFD 1, Box 560 n/a not for publication

city, town Kingstown ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Queen Anne's 035

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Francis E. Schaubert

street & number RFD 1, Box 560 telephone no.: 778-2815

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. n/a liber

street & number folio

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory

date 1984 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Survey No. QA-422

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

MYSTERY is a 34' 7" long sailing log canoe carrying two masts and a racing rig. She is double-ended, with a straight stem with little rake and a longhead bow, and a straight, sharp stern. Log-built with carvel-fitted rising planks, the boat was built by Harry Sinclair in Oxford, Maryland in 1932. She has a beam of 8' 8-1/2" and has a centerboard. Originally sailed with a skipjack rig, the canoe now has a Tilghman racing rig and is noted for her very tall masts. The canoe is privately owned and races under No. 8. The hull is painted white and has been reinforced using the WEST epoxy system.

MYSTERY is built of five logs and received her name because of the secrecy of her building. She has a longhead, a straight stem with little rake, and a straight, sharp stern on which a rudder is hung on pintles. The boat was built in the Tilghman fashion with carvel-fitted rising planks and wide washboards forming a half-deck. Her stern is overhung with an outrigger, or bumpkin. She carries a long bowsprit with heavy standing rigging.

Her foremast is stayed with two shrouds and spreaders. Foresail and mainsail have clubs at the clew, and sprits. There is a large jib and, with the kite and squaresail, the boat carries almost 2000 square feet of sail. Her new foremast is said to be more than 70' long, but it is a "mystery." The mainmast is shorter, and unstayed. The foremast is the largest ever used in a canoe of 35 feet long or less.

Without auxiliary power, the canoe is towed or sails to and from races. Racing gear includes springboards and extra sails. The canoe is dismantled after racing. MYSTERY's log hull has been reinforced with epoxy using the WEST system. It is painted white, with varnished washboards and spars and some brightwork trim.

8. Significance

Survey No.

QA-422

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1932 Builder/Architect Harry Sinclair

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☒ none

Level of Significance: ☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This vessel is significant as being one of the last surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay racing log canoes that carry on a tradition of racing on the Eastern Shore of Maryland that has existed since the 1840's. In addition, it is a surviving representative of the oldest indigenous type of boat on the Bay--the working log canoe--which was developed in the 17th century by early European settlers from the aboriginal dugout canoe.

Used for transportation and for harvesting the rich bounty of the Bay, log canoes changed little over the centuries. Constructed of from two to seven logs and ranging in length from 20 to 35 feet, they were rigged with one or two sharp-headed spritsails with or without a jib set on raking; unstayed pole masts. Easily and cheaply constructed, some 6300 existed in Bay waters in the 1880's. The working canoes first began to be raced in 1840 and by the 1870's area boatbuilders were building canoes specifically for racing, with lighter, thinner hulls and sharper lines. As mast heights increased to increase sail area the canoes became inherently unstable, necessitating the use of springboards and human ballast. Also part of the racing rig is the outrigger added for balance and to enable the sail tender to sit beyond the overlarge mainsail.

With the invention of the gasoline engine many log canoes were converted to power for oystering, but were then converted back to sail as interest in racing waxed and waned over the years. After peak years of popularity in the 1880's and 1890's interest in log canoe racing waned in the first two decades of the 20th century only to be revived again in the 1920's. The popularity of racing, spearheaded by the Miles River Yacht Club continued unabated until the present day, although the number of vessels active in the fleet has varied considerably.

MYSTERY gains her significance as having been built during the revival of log canoe racing in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The vessel was built by Harry Sinclair of Oxford in 1932 for John D. Williams, who also commissioned the canoe JAY DEE. Because there was a great deal of secrecy involved in her construction the canoe was given the name MYSTERY. A later owner, John Whittum, sailed the canoe for a few years with a skip-jack rig before re-rigging her as a canoe. Under Whittum MYSTERY won the Governor's Cup in 1962. Several years ago the vessel created a stir with a new 60' foremast, the largest ever used in a log canoe of 35 feet or less, and in 1983 MYSTERY appeared for the Governor's Cup race with another new mast, this one reputed to be the longest ever, but again, the "mystery" of its height was not divulged.

9. Major Bibliographical References

QA-422

Brewington, Marion V., Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes (Cambridge, Md.: Cornell Maritime Press, 1963)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Chestertown, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 18 410400 4340180
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic boundary of this movable vessel is co-terminous with the hull. The vessel is usually stored at the location indicated in Item 2.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty and Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

organization Maryland Historical Society

date May 1984

street & number 201 West Monument Street

telephone (301) 685-3750

city or town Baltimore

state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

5762 1 SE ELKTON 34 MI.
(BETTERTON) KENNEDYVILLE 53 MI.

5762 1 SW
(HANEVILLE)

DE

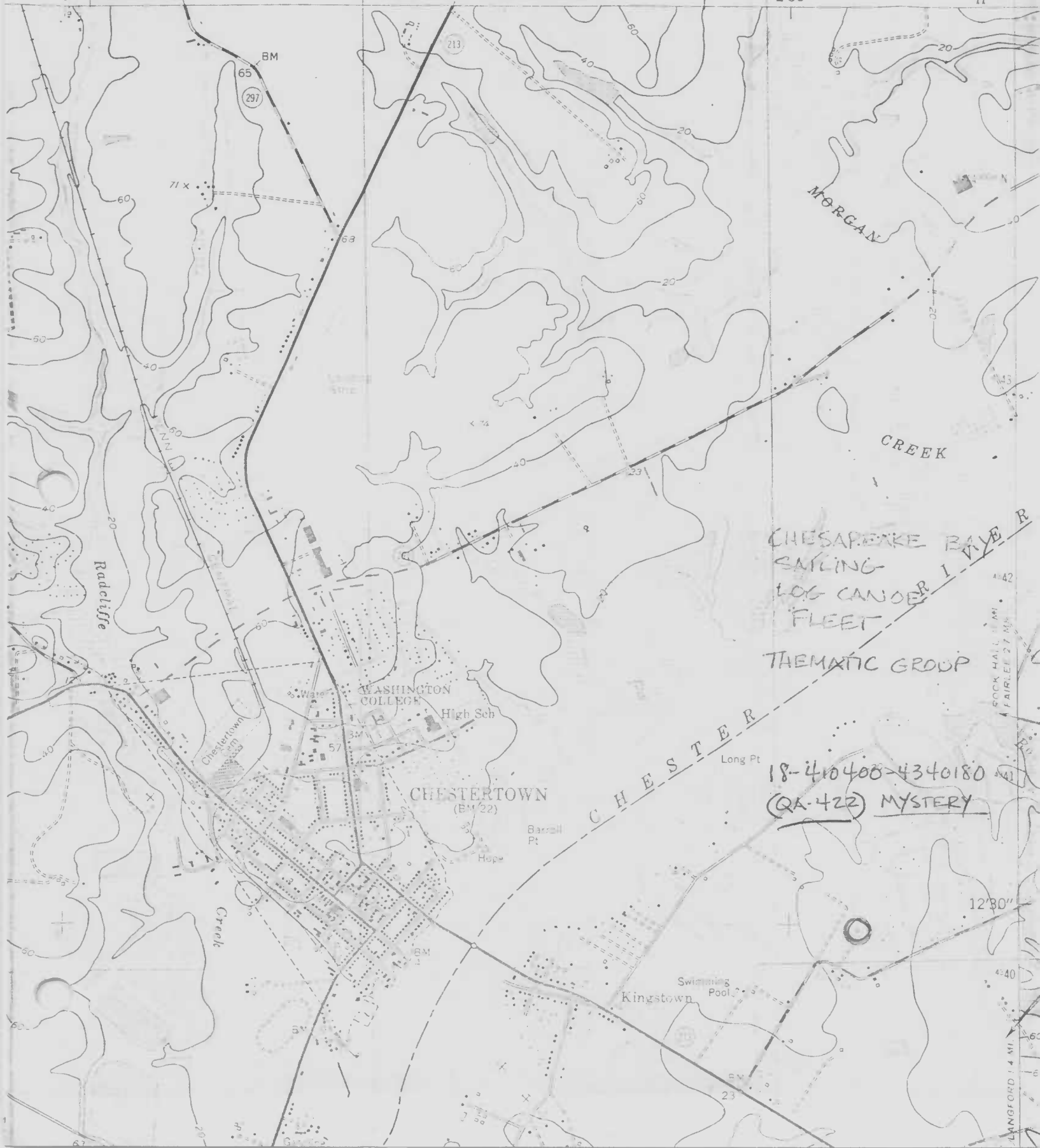
76°07'30"

39°15'

41

2'30"

5' WORTON 2 MI



CHESAPEAKE BAY R
SAILING
LOG CANOE
FLEET

THEMATIC GROUP

CHESTER

Long Pt

18-410400-4340180

(QA-422) MYSTERY

12'30"

4:40

4:40

4:40

4:40

4:40